AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) ~~A vacation request processing system comprising~~ Logic stored on a computer readable medium that when executed causes a computer to perform a vacation processing request system, the logic comprising:

logic configured to provide a workload estimate comprising at least a first workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center;

logic configured to provide a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a first rule;

logic configured to receive an email from a first employee, the email comprising a vacation request from the first employee; and

logic configured to process the vacation request ~~of a first employee~~ based on the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time.

3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first period of time.

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5. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

8. (Original) The system of claim 7, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

9. (Original)   The system of claim 1, wherein logic configured to process the vacation request comprises:

logic configured to receive the vacation request of the first employee;

logic configured to deny the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and

logic configured to grant the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the vacation request was denied.

10. (Original)   The system of claim 9, wherein granting the vacation request comprises transmitting an e-mail to the first employee.

11. (Currently Amended)   A method of processing a vacation request, the method comprising:

providing a workload estimate comprising at least a first workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center;

providing a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a first rule;

receiving an email from a first employee, the email comprising a vacation request from the first employee; and

processing the vacation request of a first employee based on the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first period of time.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

16. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

19. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein processing the vacation request comprises:
      receiving the vacation request of the first employee;
      denying the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and
      granting the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the vacation request was denied.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein granting the vacation request comprises transmitting an e-mail to the first employee.

21. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising:
      means for receiving the vacation request of the first employee;

means for denying the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and

means for granting the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the vacation request was denied.

22.   (Currently Amended) A vacation request processing system ~~stored on a computer-readable medium~~, the system comprising:

a memory comprising:

computer-readable code that provides a workload estimate comprising at least a first workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center;

computer-readable code that provides a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a first rule;

computer-readable code that receives an email from a first employee, the email comprising a vacation request from the first employee; and

computer-readable code that processes the vacation request of a first employee based on the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria; and

a processor for executing the computer-readable code stored in the memory.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time.

24. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

25. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first period of time.

26. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

27. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

28. (Original)   The system of claim 22, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual basis.

30. (Currently Amended)   The method of system 22, wherein ~~computer-readable code that processes the vacation request~~ memory further comprises:

computer-readable code that receives the vacation request of the first employee;

computer-readable code that denies the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and

computer-readable code that grants the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the vacation request was denied.

31. (Currently Amended)   The system of claim 30, wherein ~~in~~ granting the vacation request computer-readable code transmits an e-mail to the first employee.